

What to Tell Your Doctor: Essential Foot Warning Signs for Diabetics

The routine foot exam for diabetic patients has to be a part of your regular medical check-up. If the feet have been ignored during your regular doctor visit, you should remind your doctor at your next visit. I strongly recommend that everyone with diabetes be under the care of a foot specialist, a podiatrist. The chance of having diabetic foot complications can be greatly reduced if you are under the care of a specialist on a regular basis.

Basic preventive foot care consists of early detection of any changes that occur in the diabetic feet and early surgical and medical intervention to offset costly consequences.

WHAT YOU SHOULD NOTIFY YOUR PODIATRIST ON YOUR REGULAR VISITS

1. The recent development of a new sore on your feet.
2. Any recent color change to your feet.
3. Any change in how your feet feel, whether it be pain or numbness. This could be the occasional burning sensation and tingling and / or pins and needles sensation.
4. Any change in foot deformities such as a formation or worsening of hammer toes, bunions, corns and calluses whether they are painful or not.
5. Pain or cramps in the thigh, buttock or leg, which has recently developed or is getting worse.
6. Any swelling, redness, heat in the feet that is accompanied by fever and chills. Truly in this case, don't wait until your next doctor visit, let your podiatrist examine you immediately.
7. The painless collapse of the arch of the foot, especially is accompanied by inflammation, heat and redness of the entire foot. This may be the telltale early sign of Charcot's diabetic foot. This condition needs immediate medical attention to differentiate from an infection. You need complete bed rest and notify your foot specialist.
8. If the toes suddenly turn blue (cyanotic) they also need immediate medical attention regardless of the degree of pain. This may be the beginning of spontaneous gangrene

- of the toes from an arterial embolism. 9. Don't wait for your next doctor visit if you notice redness, blisters, and foul-smelling fluid under corns or calluses.
10. Changes in skin condition, such as increased dryness, new cracks develop around the heel, to be mentioned to your doctor.
11. Any recent signs of toe or leg hair loss.
12. Leg pain at night when you are lying in bed and is relieved by walking around.

TEST YOURSELF

(T F) True or false

1. If you notice foul smelling liquid under the callus,
 - A. you should apply some antiseptic solution around the callus.
 - B. Take some antibiotics that you have previously had from the doctor when you had the flu.
 - C. You can ignore it as long as there is no pain.
 - D. Soak the foot in warm water three times a day.
 - E. call your doctor immediately.
2. The entire foot is hot red and swollen, yet you do not experience any pain or discomfort when you stand and walk.
 - A. You may have an infection.
 - B. You may have started the development of Charcot's foot.
 - C. Get off your foot immediately and call your doctor.
 - D. all above
3. The calf muscle cramp as you walk gets severe for the past few days.

This means:

- A. You have arthritis
- B. You may have a sudden blockage in your leg arteries.
- C. You may have a muscle tear.
- D. call your doctor
- E. all above

4. Where do you find your pulses in the foot?
5. Name all signs of poor blood circulation at the foot.
6. What signature and symptoms indicate you may have diabetic neuropathy?
7. Why is neuropathy so dangerous?
8. What is the most common cause of foot ulcers on the bottom of the foot?
9. What is the simple preventive measure you can do to prevent foot ulcers on the bottom of the foot?
10. What is the most common cause of thick, yellowish toenails?
11. What could be the consequence of severely dry skin on the foot?
12. How do orthotics help prevent foot ulcers?

1. (E) 2. (D) 3. (E)